Top 5 Questions
October 2014

1. **I heard that Teacher/Principal Effectiveness is being removed as a measure for the School Performance Index. Does this mean Teacher/Principal Effectiveness requirements, including SLOs, are going away?**

It is true that SD DOE is removing Teacher/Principal Effectiveness as an indicator for the School Performance Index. However, <u>Teacher/Principal Effectiveness systems are still required as part of the larger accountability system</u> in state law and administrative rule. These requirements also remain an important component of South Dakota's ESEA Flexibility Waiver. Bottom line: Implementation of Teacher/Principal Effectiveness systems is still required; schools just won't earn points for that indicator on the SPI.

2. **Considering the timing of the availability of state assessment results, how do I use state assessment results as an end-of-year assessment of student progress in my SLO?**

Assessment of student learning is a critical component of the Student Learning Objective process, and teachers assigned to tested grades and subjects must use data from the state assessments as part of their SLO setting process. Local districts have the flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to use state assessment data as part of this process. In most cases, <u>teachers will use prior-year assessment data as a starting point, to identify core concepts and standards that will serve as the focus of SLOs</u>. Other assessments may be used to track student growth throughout the year to empower teachers to better adjust instruction to meet the needs of their students.

3. **Does the SLO need to be completed prior to April 15th?**

No. While we understand the desire to have the Student Learning Objective process completed by April 15, there is nothing mandating that a teacher's Overall Rating needs to be determined by that time. Districts would have evidence from professional practice observations and artifacts to inform evaluation and the contract process. When the final growth data is available for a teacher, districts must combine the Professional Practice Rating and the Student Growth Rating (i.e., SLO) to determine the Overall Rating. This rating should be used as one measure to identify if a teacher needs to be on a Plan of Improvement for the following year. It is not expected to be the sole measure used to make hiring and firing decisions.

Beginning in fall of 2016, aggregate information about Overall Ratings will be collected via the Personnel Record Form, or PRF, based on the prior year's final ratings.

4. **Can the length of the SLO cover a short period of instructional time?**

According to ARSD 24:57:01:01(9), Student Learning Objectives should reflect a rigorous, yet realistic expectation of student growth that can be achieved during the instructional period. It is a local decision as to the length of time; however, best practice indicates it should cover the most critical learning that needs to occur in the class. It is recommended that the period of instruction should be the length of the course, whether it is a quarter, semester or an entire year. This allows for an assessment of progress and adjustments in instruction if needed. SLOs are not intended to be "unit tests" but are intended to measure more comprehensive progress towards key learning objectives and standards.

5. **My district wants to use Teachscape. Who do I need to contact in order to get started?**

If you have questions about accessing Teachscape, you should email SDSetup@teachscape.com. This year, Teachscape has released a new product called the User Admin Tool which gives a district-designated contact the ability to add/delete/change teaching assignments instead of having to submit forms and wait for Teachscape to make these changes. Districts using Reflect must also identify the "Evaluation Assignment Manager" role which allows a designated individual to assign the evaluation plans to teachers.

To get started, districts should complete the survey questionnaire and should contact Tora Troop at Teachscape with any questions about the process.